



The Hacker Files

NO 1 AUG 92
1⁹⁵ CAN 2⁵⁰



digitronix

SoftWar (1.0) by Lewis Shiner, Tom Sutton & Mark Buckingham

10 NOVEMBER, 2100 HOURS.
THE PENTAGON.



WANT
A
COKE?

SOMETHING.
I'M ABOUT TO
NOD OUT.



THIS
SYSTEM
IS...



...LIKE...



...DEAD.

TAP
TAP
TAP

TAPATATAPATA



IT'S THE
GOVERNMENT,
KID. GET USED
TO IT.



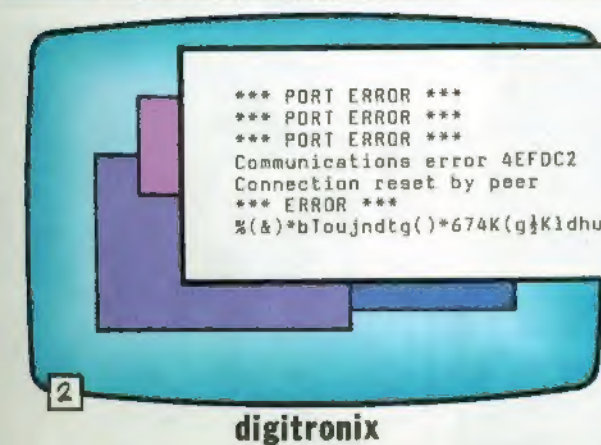
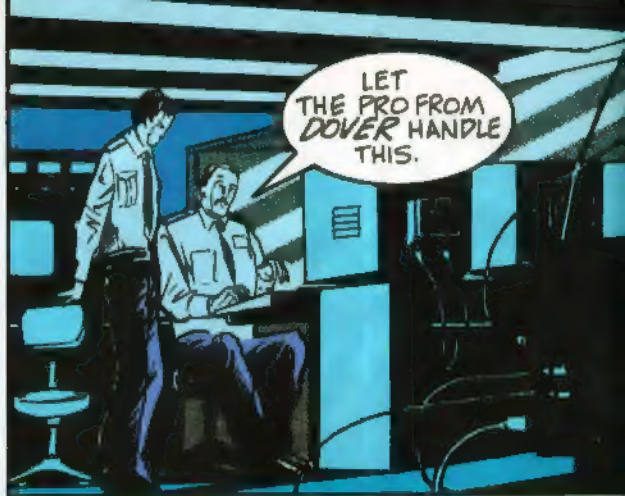
UH,
FRANK...



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SOMETHING'S
WRONG.



SOFT WAR

CHAPTER

1

RING

They never leave you alone.

RING

Especially when you
get to a CRISIS.

RING

They always WANT
something from you.

RING

No matter how BUSY you are,
no matter how IMPORTANT what
you're doing happens to BE.

TOM SUTTON
PENCILS

LEWIS SHINER
WRITER-CREATOR

BOB
GREENBERGER
EDITOR

LOVEAN
KINDIGERSKI
COLORS

MARK BUCKINGHAM
INKS

THIS IS JACK MARSHALL. I'M BUSY. LEAVE A NUMBER, MAYBE I'LL GET BACK TO YOU.

BEEP

MARSHALL, IT'S STEEL. PICK UP THE GODDAMN PHONE.

Cattle stampede.

OKAY, OKAY. WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

Your move, partner.

I CAN'T TELL YOU OVER THE PHONE. I NEED YOU IN WASHINGTON RIGHT NOW, NO QUESTIONS ASKED.

"NO QUESTIONS" WILL COST YOU.

run like hell

I'M TALKING NATIONAL EMERGENCY HERE.

Marshall, you're dead. Another game? (Y/N)

HELL.

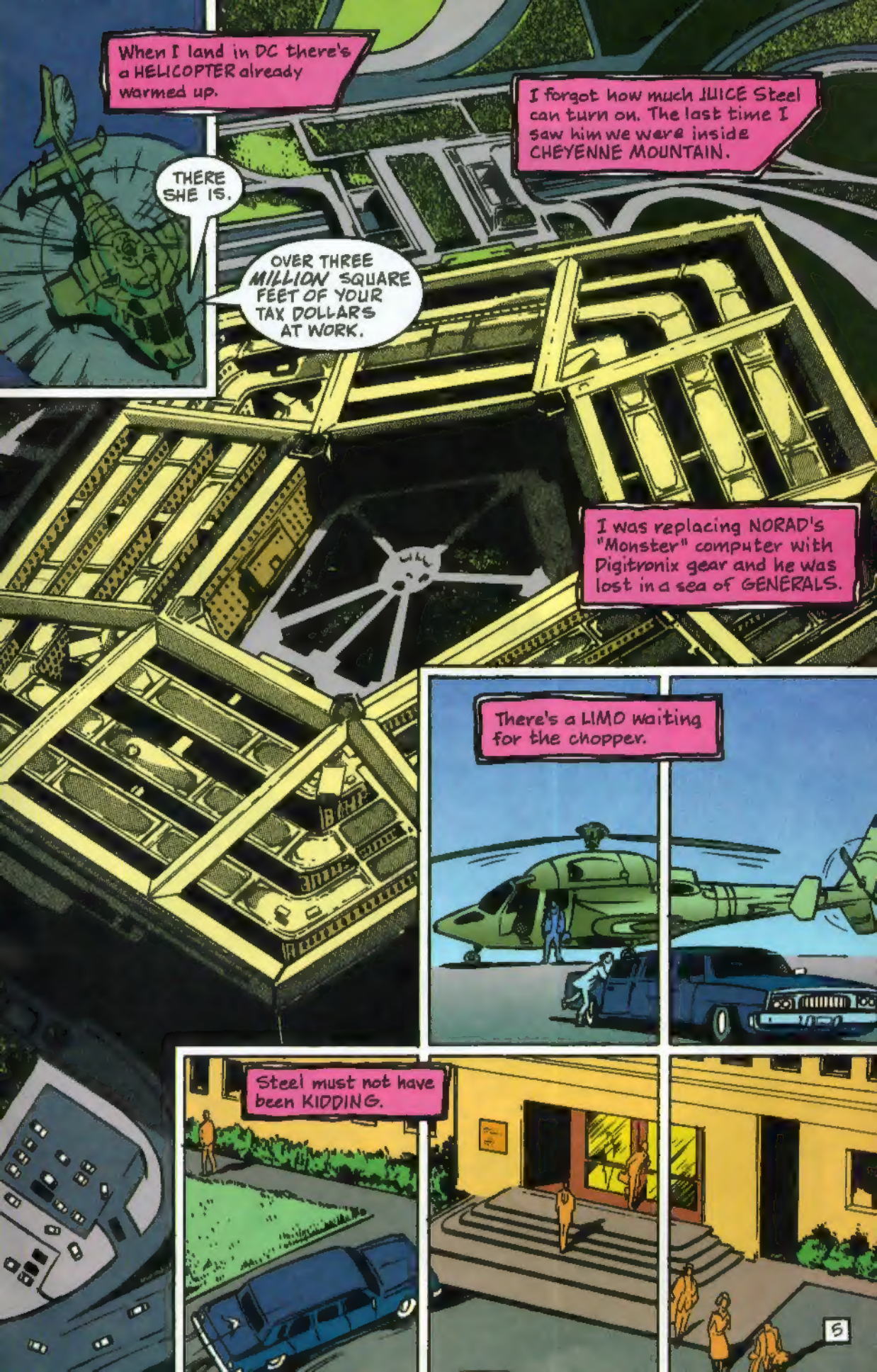
ALL RIGHT. I GUESS I'M IN.

"DON'T PACK."

"I'LL HAVE A DRIVER THERE IN FIFTEEN MINUTES."

"THERE'S A CHARTERED LEAR JET WAITING AT RDU."

"SEE YOU IN AN HOUR AND A HALF."



When I land in DC there's
a HELICOPTER already
warmed up.

THERE
SHE IS.

OVER THREE
MILLION SQUARE
FEET OF YOUR
TAX DOLLARS
AT WORK.

I forgot how much JUICE Steel
can turn on. The last time I
saw him we were inside
CHEYENNE MOUNTAIN.

I was replacing NORAD's
"Monster" computer with
Digitronix gear and he was
lost in a sea of GENERALS.

There's a LIMO waiting
for the chopper.

Steel must not have
been KIDDING.



MR. MARSHALL?
IF YOU'LL JUST GIVE
US A **THUMBPRINT**
FOR VERIFICATION.

My TAX dollars at work...



MY NAME'S
PAWSON. I'LL
TAKE YOU TO
STEEL.

Too bad I don't get to PICK
the work those dollars do.



WE'RE OVER
IN THE BASEMENT
OF D-RING. NOT TOO
FAR, BUT WE'D BETTER
GRAB A CART.

BEEN HERE
BEFORE?

NO.

Wouldn't be that hard. Just a
simple CHECKLIST on the back
of your Form 1040A.



JCS COUNTRY
IS RIGHT UPSTAIRS--
THAT'S THE JOINT CHIEFS.
THE SHOPPING ARCADE
IS ONE FLOOR
DOWN...

A plan like that would never get past
the POLITICIANS. It would put too
many of them out of work.

D

LEVEL 2

And what if nobody wanted to pay for their WARS?

KEEP THIS PASS IN PLAIN SIGHT. SECURITY IS AS JUMPY AS EVERYBODY ELSE.

DATA PROCESS

MARSHALL!
IT'S ABOUT TIME...
JESUS, DID YOU HAVE
TO WEAR THAT
SHIRT?

YOU
SAID NOT
TO
PACK.

IT'S A
TOTAL PANIC HERE.
THE ENTIRE ARPANET
IS JAMMED. TAKE
A LOOK.

ARPA is the Advanced Research Projects Agency, and their NET ties into universities and private research all over the country.

It's also connected to INTERNET, with terminals all over the world.

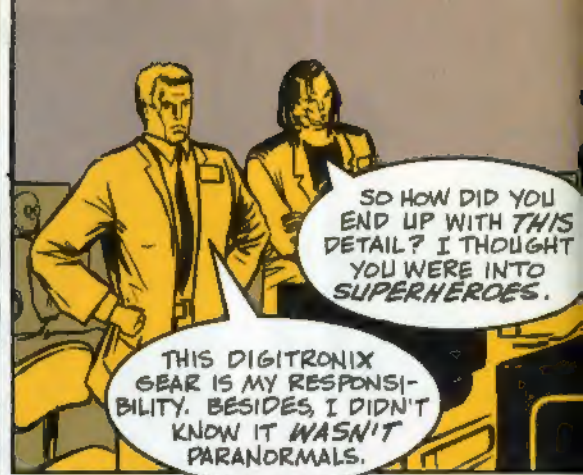
Which is connected to something called MILNET.

Then there's SECURENET, connected to SAC's 19 wings of long-range bombers and their 1000 Minuteman missiles.

SHUT IT
DOWN.

Not to mention NORAD's Space Surveillance Center inside Cheyenne Mountain.

NO. IF
THERE WAS A
NUCLEAR ATTACK,
WE'D NEVER KNOW
WHAT HIT
US.







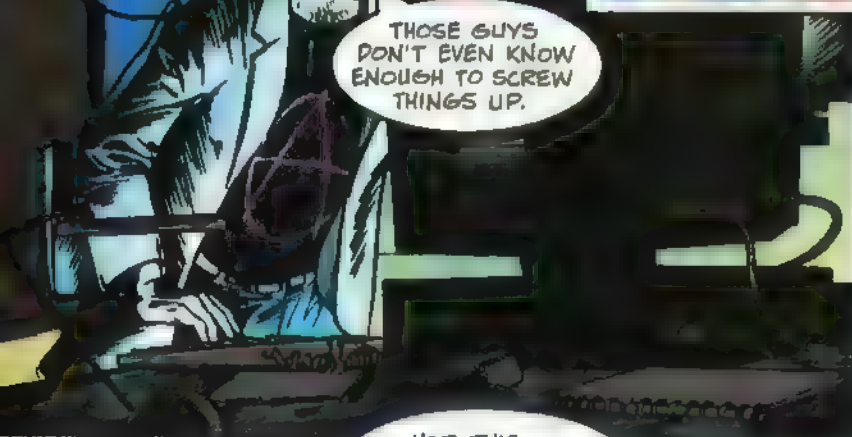
IT'S BEEN TWO YEARS SINCE DIGITRONIX FIRE--ER, SINCE YOU WORKED FOR THEM. MAYBE THINGS HAVE GONE DOWNHILL.

THOSE GUYS DON'T EVEN KNOW ENOUGH TO SCREW THINGS UP.



I'LL CALL DOWN FOR THE PASSWORDS.

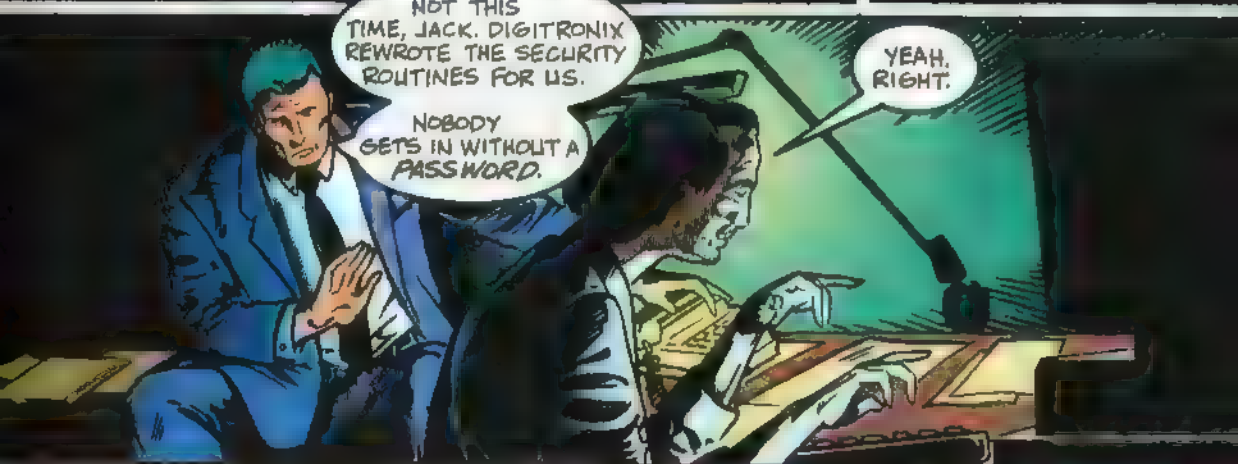
DON'T BOTHER.



NOT THIS TIME, JACK. DIGITRONIX REWROTE THE SECURITY ROUTINES FOR US.

NOBODY GETS IN WITHOUT A PASSWORD.

YEAH, RIGHT.



NOW BACK OFF.

Enter user name: hacker
Enter password: XXXXXXXXXXXX

Super-user privileged
Long time no see, Jack.

Pent1>

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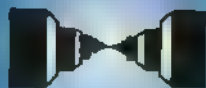
I NEED TO CONCENTRATE.

Here it COMES.

When it's GOOD
it's like I go right
into the SCREEN

That's the way I
designed the system.

It looks like
the INSIDE of
my own HEAD.

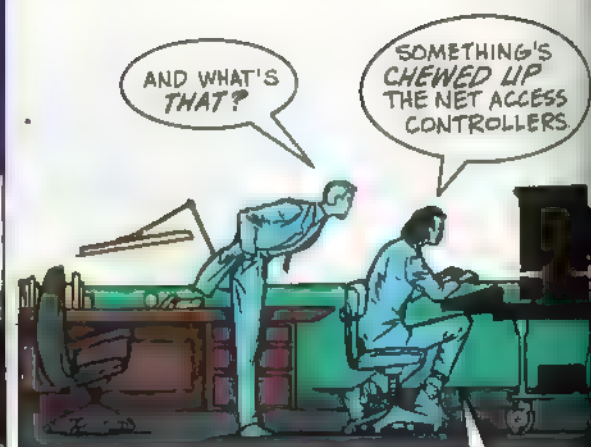
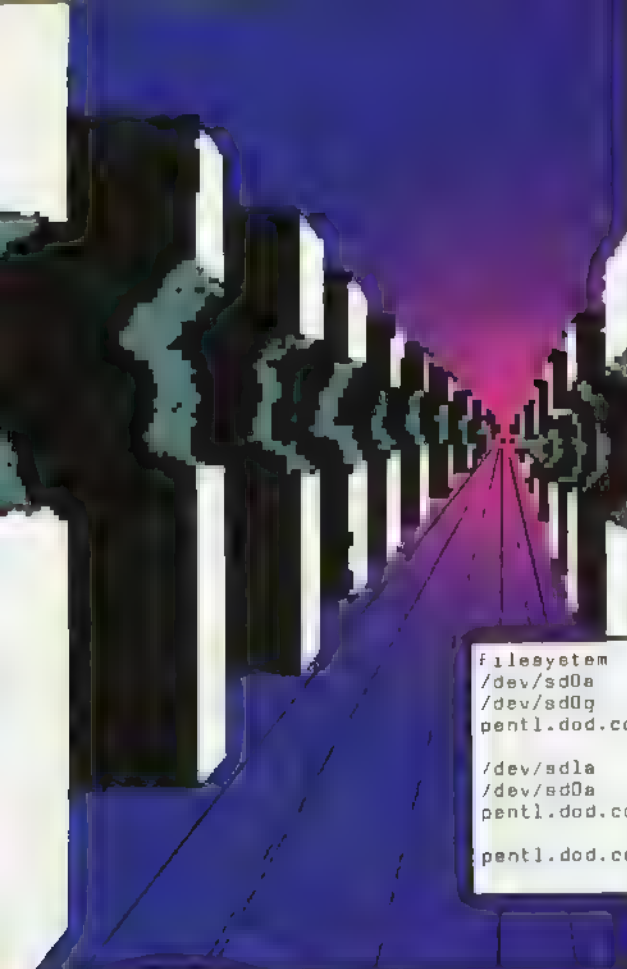


WHAT
ARE THOSE
THINGS?

FILE BLOCKS.
THEY'RE GRAPHIC
REPRESENTATIONS
OF DATA.

Steel's voice,
calling me BACK.





AND WHAT'S THAT?

SOMETHING'S CHEWED UP THE NET ACCESS CONTROLLERS.

YOUR DISK SPACE IS SHOT, TOO.

filesystem	kbytes	used	avail	capacity
/dev/sd0a	7548	7548	0	100%
/dev/sd0g	42115	42115	0	100%
pentl.dod.com:/usr/share	330299	330299	0	100%
/dev/sdla	15113	15113	0	100%
/dev/sd0a	29927	29927	0	100%
pentl.dod.com:/usr/share	330299	339299	0	100%
pentl.dod.com:/pub/wgames	512720	512720	0	100%

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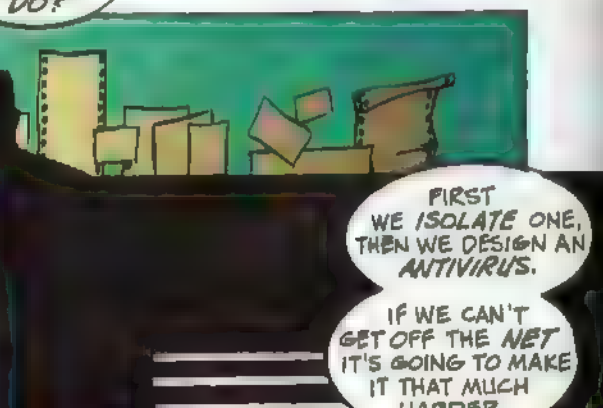


I DON'T THINK THERE'S ANY QUESTION ABOUT IT.



YOU'VE PICKED UP A VIRUS.

OH GOD. WHAT DO WE DO?



FIRST WE ISOLATE ONE, THEN WE DESIGN AN ANTIVIRUS.

IF WE CAN'T GET OFF THE NET IT'S GOING TO MAKE IT THAT MUCH HARDER.





I DON'T UNDERSTAND. WHERE DID IT COME FROM?

COULD HAVE COME FROM ANYWHERE. THERE'S WHAT, 300 NODES ON ARPANET ALONE?

ADD INTERNET AND YOU'RE TALKING ANOTHER 60,000.

WHO STARTED IT? THE RUSSIANS?

MORE LIKELY SOME KID.

WHAT, LIKE THOSE KIDS YOU HANG OUT WITH? WHAT DO YOU CALL THEM, THE HEAVY METAL KIDS?

SPEED METAL KIDS. AND THEY'RE HACKERS, NOT CRACKERS.

WHICH MEANS THEY'RE IN IT FOR KNOWLEDGE, NOT FOR MONEY, AND NOT TO SCREW THINGS UP.

WE'RE OUT OF YOUR WORLD NOW, AND INTO MINE.

PEOPLE MAKE THEIR OWN RULES HERE. YOU NEED TO LEARN YOUR WAY AROUND.

TAKE VIRUSES, FOR
EXAMPLE. YOU'VE HEARD
THE WORD, BUT HOW MUCH
DO YOU REALLY KNOW
ABOUT THEM?

LIKE THE DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN A VIRUS AND A
WORM, WHICH DOESN'T
REPRODUCE ITSELF?

"THE THEORY'S BEEN AROUND--IN
PRINT--SINCE THE MID-SEVENTIES
AT LEAST THE IDEA IS THAT A
PROGRAM COULD WORK JUST
LIKE A BIOLOGICAL VIRUS...

"...ATTACH ITSELF TO A
HEALTHY CELL...

".. AND INJECT IT WITH A
DEADLY MESSAGE,

```
while (get_next())
```

```
{
```

```
if(s_read(test,buf1,100))
```

```
{
```

```
if(buf1[10]==v_flg)
```

```
break;
```

```
buf1[10]=v_flg;
```

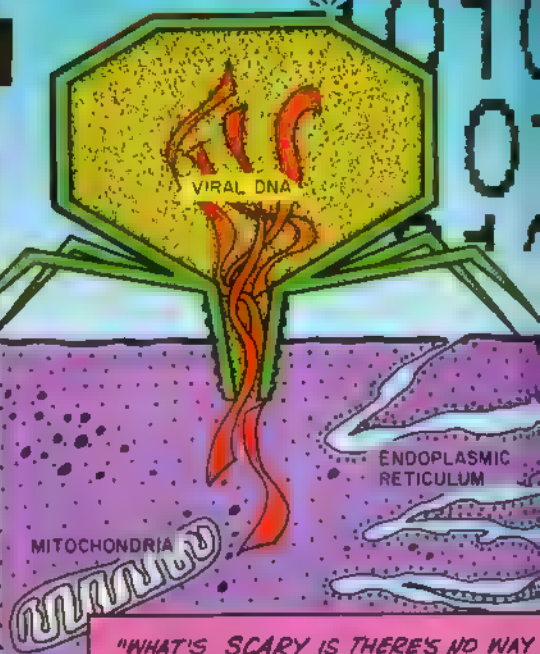
```
wt_vir();
```

```
++ctr;
```

```
}
```

```
}
```

Generation 15
Population 7



"WHAT'S SCARY IS THERE'S NO WAY
TO KEEP A DETERMINED VIRUS OUT.
NOT UNLESS YOU SHUT YOURSELF
OFF FROM THE REST OF THE WORLD

"AND THERE ARE SOME REAL CRAZIES
OUT THERE PEOPLE WHO THINK MACHINE
INTELLIGENCE IS THE NEXT STAGE IN
EVOLUTION. WHO THINK A VIRUS PROGRAM
HAS A RIGHT TO LIFE TOO. WHO THINK
IT'S ENTITLED TO WHATEVER NICHE
IT CAN CARVE OUT FOR ITSELF."

YOU'RE
SCARING THE HELL
OUT OF ME.

Generation 20
Population 1

charliet pentl:ttyp5
yoshio pentl:ttyp7
steel pentl:ttyp0
hacker pentl:ttyp1

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YOU'VE
GOT THE DIGITRONIX
SUPPORT TEAM ON THE
SYSTEM.

HEY, COME
ON. YOU KNOW
HOW IT IS.

OUR SERVICE
CONTRACT WITH
DIGITRONIX...

IF YOU
THOUGHT THAT CONTRACT
WAS WORTH A DAMN
YOU'D NEVER HAVE CALLED
ME IN.

DIGITRONIX
HATES MY GUTS. THEY
POISONED ME WITH EVERY
OTHER COMPUTER COMPANY
IN THE COUNTRY. THEY'D
SCREW UP MY FREELANCE
GIG IF THEY
COULD.

SO EITHER
THEY'RE OFF THE
SYSTEM OR I'M OUT
OF HERE.

MORE
THREATS.

THEY'RE
IN HERE.

WHAT'S
NEXT DOOR?

THAT'S A
TEMPEST FILE
SERVER, JACK. YOU
DON'T NEED TO BE
IN THERE.

STAFF

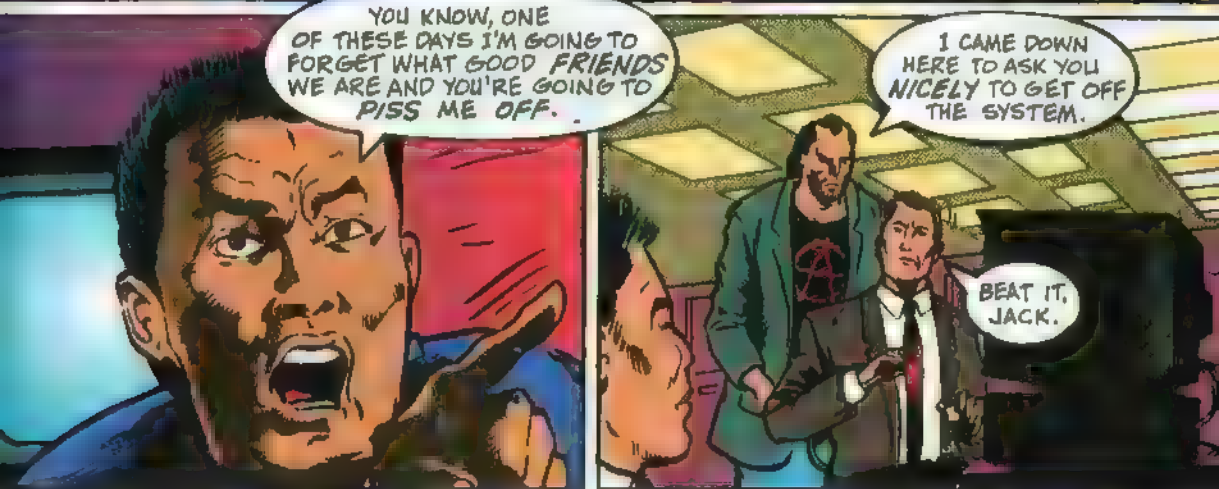
NO
ENTRY

FILE SERVER is the current
jargon for MAINFRAME.
TEMPEST means it's so
secret you're supposed
to be inside a SAFE when
you look at it.



WHY, JACK.
WHAT A PLEASANT
SURPRISE.

YEAH, I'LL
BET. PLAYTIME'S
OVER, YOSHIO. I'M
ON THE CASE.



YOU KNOW, ONE
OF THESE DAYS I'M GOING TO
FORGET WHAT GOOD FRIENDS
WE ARE AND YOU'RE GOING TO
PISS ME OFF.

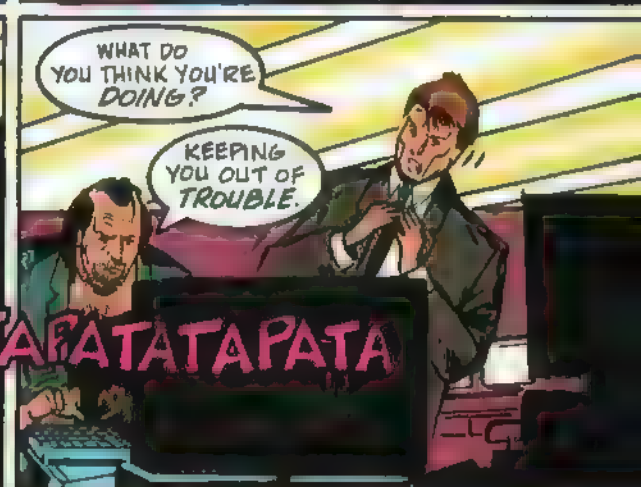
I CAME DOWN
HERE TO ASK YOU
NICELY TO GET OFF
THE SYSTEM.

BEAT IT,
JACK.



EXCUSE
ME...

HEY!



WHAT DO
YOU THINK YOU'RE
DOING?

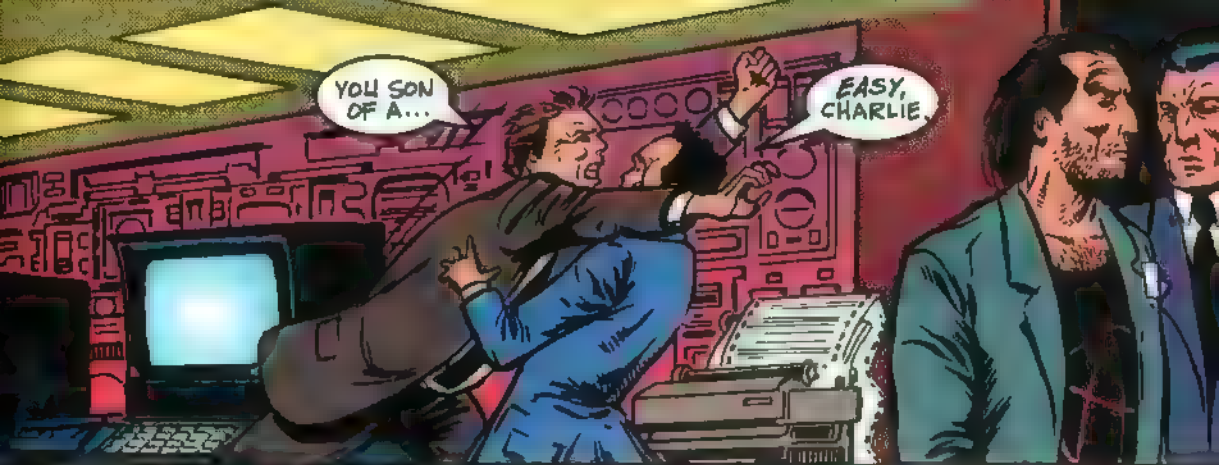
KEEPING
YOU OUT OF
TROUBLE.

TAFATATAPATA



HEY!
I'M LOCKED OUT
OF THE
PARTITION!

LET'S
GO.



YOU SON
OF A...

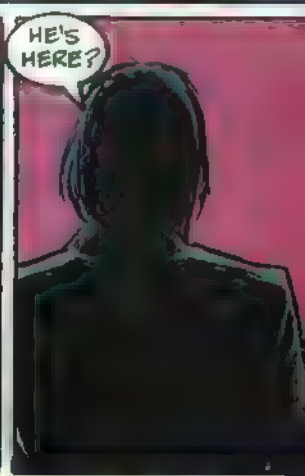
EASY,
CHARLIE.



WE'LL LET
SUTCLIFFE
HANDLE HIM.



SUTCLIFFE?



HE'S
HERE?

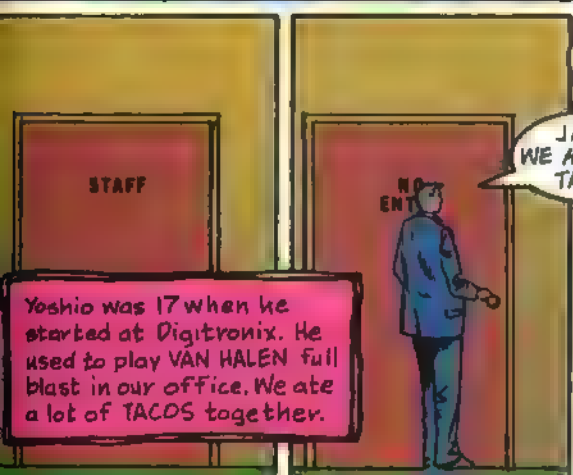


RIGHT ACROSS
THE POTOMAC, JACK.
NOW WILL YOU
PLAY BALL?

JACK.



NO.




I DON'T WANT
TO TALK ABOUT
IT, OKAY?

JACK,
WE HAVE TO
TALK.



Yoshio was 17 when he started at Digitronix. He used to play VAN HALEN full blast in our office. We ate a lot of TACOS together.

Too bad he turned into a corporate STOOGE.



THIS IS MORE
IMPORTANT THAN YOUR EGO.
SUTCLIFFE'S GOING TO
BE FIRED.

TO HELL WITH
SUTCLIFFE.

TAKE THE REST
OF THE NIGHT OFF.
I NEED TO
CONCENTRATE.

The **PIECES** are starting to
come together in my HEAD.

OKAY,
BUT I HAVE TO
LOCK YOUR PASS UP.
REGULATIONS.

FINE.

BATHROOM'S
THROUGH THERE. STAY
OUT OF THE HALL,
OKAY?

RIGHT.
GOODNIGHT TO
YOU, TOO.

Wait 'til it's ALL there ..

. then GO.

3:10:37am

emacs cure.c
*** new file ***

digitronix

Five AM. Blood sugar's LOW.
I start thinking about a lot
of CRAP that I shouldn't. My
EX-WIFE, for instance.

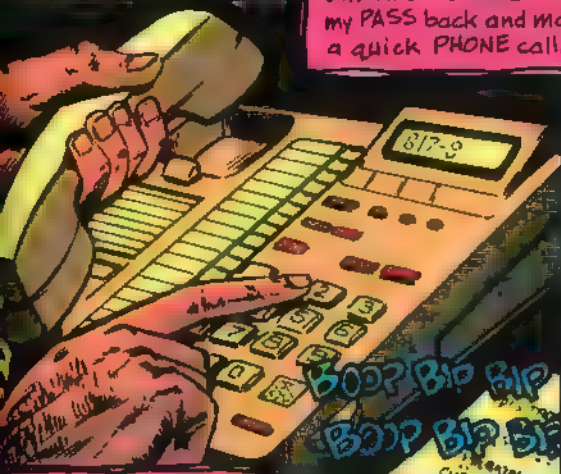
5:03:29am

cc cure.c
Digitronix C Language Compiler
Version 5.3

cure.c

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But first I have to get
my PASS back and make
a quick PHONE call.



BOOP BIP BIP
BOOP BIP BIP

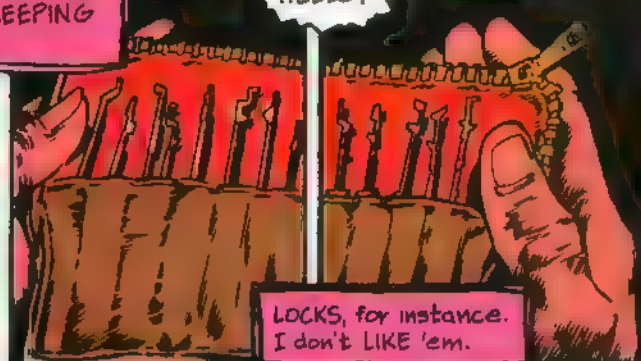
Yeah, the cabinet's
LOCKED, all right.

I want to a SHRINK for a while
after the divorce. One of the
things that came up was how
I didn't like people KEEPING
things from me.



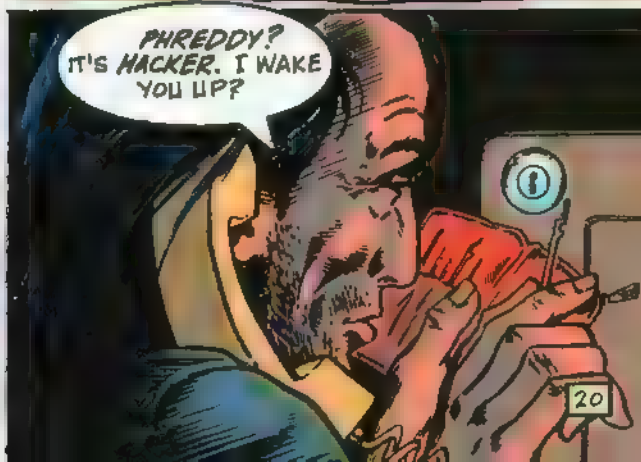
BRRING...

HELLO?



LOCKS, for instance.
I don't LIKE 'em.

PHREDDY?
IT'S HACKER. I WAKE
YOU UP?





NO, MAN,
IT'S ONLY TWO
HERE. WHATCHA
NEED?

A LITTLE
PHONE ASSISTANCE,
CAN YOU PATCH ME IN TO
SOME OF THE OTHER
KIDS?

MAYBE
DR. ZEN AND
SUE DENIM?

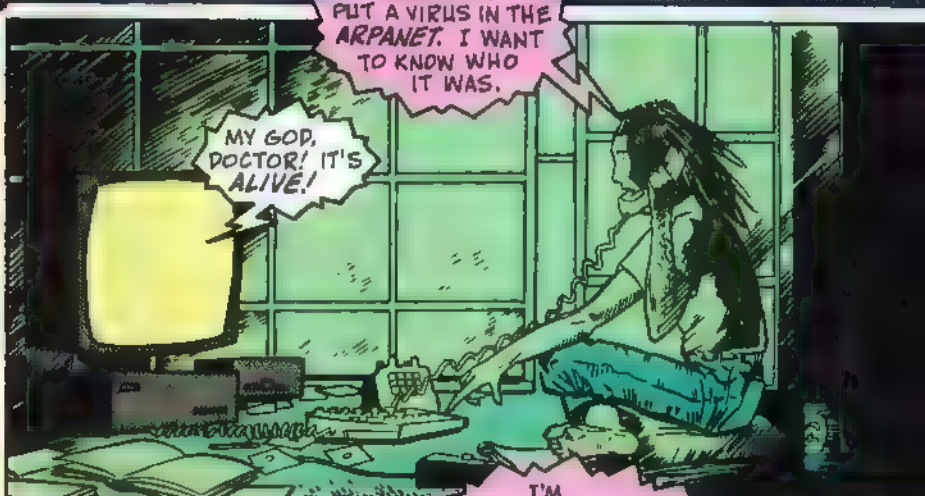
NO
PROB.

SOMEBODY
PUT A VIRUS IN THE
ARPANET. I WANT
TO KNOW WHO
IT WAS.

MY GOD,
DOCTOR! IT'S
ALIVE!



But they did
have LOCKS...

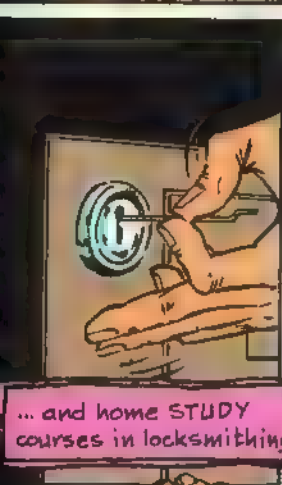


I'M
SENDING YOU ALL
COPIES OF THE VIRUS
CODE.

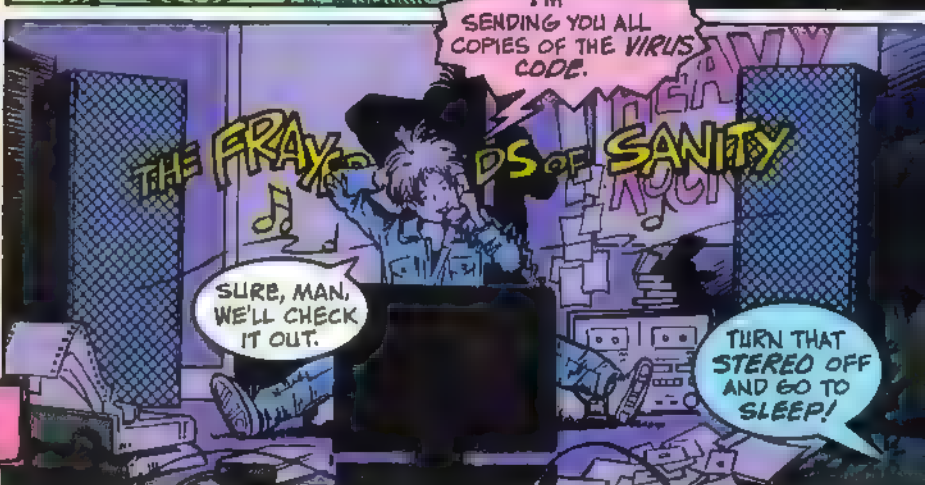
THE FRAY-
DS OF SANITY

SURE, MAN,
WE'LL CHECK
IT OUT.

TURN THAT
STEREO OFF
AND GO TO
SLEEP!



... and home STUDY
courses in locksmithing



MUCH
BETTER.





It's the file server for the
JOINT CHIEFS of STAFF. The
biggest computer Digitronix
World Industries ever built.



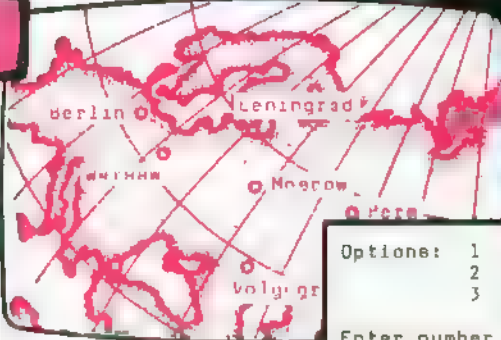
LET'S HAVE
A LOOK...



WHOA!



I hope this isn't what
it LOOKS like.



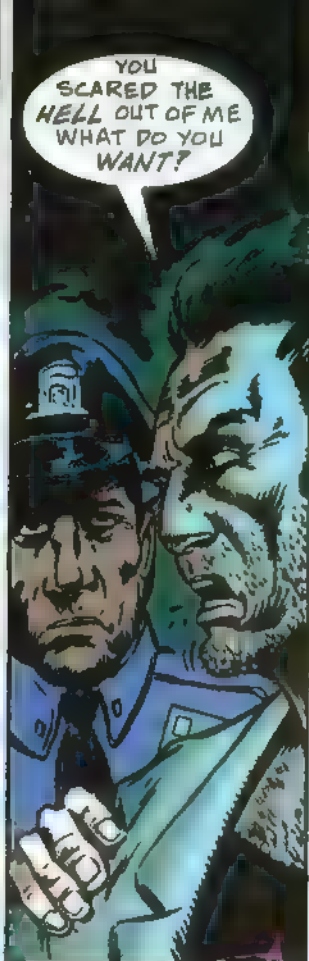
- Options: 1 Diplomacy
2 Naval attack
3 Missile launch menu

Enter number or initial letter/

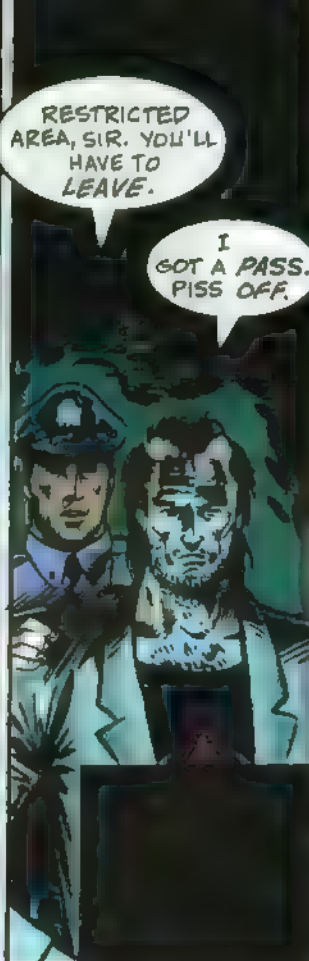
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SIR?



YOU
SCARED THE
HELL OUT OF ME
WHAT DO YOU
WANT?



RESTRICTED
AREA, SIR. YOU'LL
HAVE TO
LEAVE.

I
GOT A PASS.
PISS OFF.



YOU'RE NOT
AUTHORIZED. YOU'LL
HAVE TO COME
WITH ME.



GET
YOUR HANDS OFF,
TIN MAN.



DON'T
MAKE ME DO
THIS THE HARD
WAY.

THUD



WHOOOSH



WHACK

HE'S COMING
AROUND.

Dry, sweet air.
SMELLS like a hotel.

And that cologne...

MARSHALL,
THIS TIME YOU HAVE
REALLY SCREWED
THE POOCH.

Oh God. SUTCLIFFE...

To Be
CONTINUED...

usr/hacker/mail

DC COMICS INC. • 1325 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10019

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Welcome to the first issue of THE HACKER FILES. Like most of the publishing ventures I've had anything to do with, it was a long time coming.

It started in the spring of 1989, when Bob Wayne and I were still working on the original TIME MASTERS series. (Yes, there's going to be a sequel, but this is not the time for details on that project.) Our editor, Bob Greenberger, called me up one day and said, "How would you like to propose a new series to me? Something to do with computers, maybe tie in that Pentagon virus from a few months ago?"

I told Bob I'd have to think about it. I was involved in a number of other projects, and the idea of an ongoing monthly comic, month after month, seemed terribly daunting to me at the time. So I hung up and thought it over. Sure, I'd love my own series, but where would I get enough story ideas?

Then my brain connected what Bob had been saying with my first, unpublished novel. It was called *Red Weather* and the protagonist was a young programmer named Jack Marshall. He worked for a Texas computer company which he discovered to be up to no good. I'd written the novel based on my own experiences working for a Texas computer company called Warrex, manufacturers of the short-lived Centurion computer. These were not the global conspirators of the current comic, but they were some sharp old boys, and they gave me a wealth of characters to work with.

Once I made the connection with *Red Weather*, the ideas started to flow like crazy. I jotted down three years' worth of story lines in the space of about an hour. Then, so as not to appear too eager, I waited until the next day to call Bob back.

Bob was enthusiastic, so I sat down to write a full-fledged proposal. I had the characters pretty well in mind by this point, but I also knew that there are a lot of other factors that go into a successful comic. For one thing, I wanted it to have a unique look. If I'd had the contacts, I would have tried to get an artist on board at that point, and the two of us could have worked out a design together. Since I didn't, I tackled the artistic stuff on my own—for better or worse.

I liked the idea of a formal structure to the pages—Alan Moore had used a 9-panel grid in WATCHMEN, Neil Gaiman and Dave McKean had used symmetrical grids on a horizontal axis for BLACK ORCHID. I finally

decided on a 16-panel grid, similar to the format Frank Miller used in THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS. Because somebody other than me was going to have to draw it, I elected not to use so many obsessively small panels, and to go mostly with multiples of the 1/16 page unit. It was a flexible design and, best of all, it had a thematic link to computers. Computers work in base 16 (as compared to base 10 for us mere mortals). That is, there are six extra digits between 9 and 10, namely, a through f. So I designed HACKER FILES to use a base 16 page.

By this point I had a pretty good idea of what I wanted the book to look like. I wanted to give the story density by putting a lot of information into the panels—first person narration from Marshall himself, plus dialogue, plus input and output from the computers. I wanted to show different views of the same events simultaneously, as on page 22, where the close-up action on the right side of the page occurs at the same time as the long shot on the left.

I was obviously starting to get obsessive about control. Either I could back off or I could go ahead and push it to the limit.

I decided to push.

I did layout sketches showing exactly what I wanted on every page. I came up with a logo and a sketch of what I thought a cover might look like. And I decided, since this was my book, I would indulge a longtime fantasy and letter it myself.

I used to work for an architect, and I was familiar with architectural lettering—the only problem being that I did that in pencil. I find Speedball pens—still the industry standard for lettering—completely beyond my ability to master. I ended up lettering this first issue with Alvin Penstix markers. My eternal gratitude to Todd Klein, who taught me his method for customizing technical pens at a convention in Dallas. Thanks to him I'm now able to letter in permanent ink, just like the big boys. Many thanks also to Bob Pinaha, who patiently advised and encouraged me in my first attempts.

So now that I'd taken on every aspect of the book I possibly could, it was time to find somebody to do the things I couldn't even pretend to do: edit, pencil and ink. I submitted my finished proposal.

Meanwhile Bob had just been promoted to traffic manager (excuse me, Manager—Editorial Scheduling) and was afraid he wouldn't have time to

do the book justice. He decided he had better pass the proposal along to another editor. By early 1990—a full year after Bob got the initial idea—both the original editor and original artist for the book had faded into history. Bob agreed to find time to edit HACKER FILES himself and we started all over again.

At that point I decided that maybe it was time to abandon the idea of catching some hot new artist on his way up and simply get the best artwork I possibly could. I've been a fan of Tom Sutton's work since his days on *Creepy* and *Eerie*, especially of his recent work on *Man-Thing* for Marvel. He is not only a wonderful draftsman, his work has a powerful human quality that was very important to me for this series. I didn't want HACKER FILES to look like it was drawn by a computer. There are computers in it, but for me the important thing will always be the human characters in their confrontation with technology.

Bob had worked with Tom on STAR TREK for DC and liked him not just for the beauty of his drawing but for his professionalism. The only thing left was to convince Tom that he was right for the book—that we cared more about how he drew people than how he drew machinery (though in fact he does both splendidly). We succeeded, and I have to say that one of my greatest pleasures in doing this book is the time I've gotten to spend with Tom on the phone. He's my kind of people—smart, funny, cynical, full of great stories and astonishing experiences.

We chose Mark Buckingham for our inker not just because he's a nice guy (though he is), and not just because he's British (though that counts for big points in my book), but because of the superb work he's been doing on Neil Gaiman's scripts for *MiracleMan*.

I met Lovern Kindzierski at the San Diego Comic Con in 1990, where he rose to my defense on a panel on violence in comics. He's a kindred soul and one of the most thoughtful colorists I've ever talked to. I knew from the first that I wanted computerized coloring on THE HACKER FILES. Lovern is now freelance, with his own computer, and he's accomplished some astonishing effects for us here.

Covers were another problem. DC has begun to use painted covers to single out their mature audience horror titles, a category that HACKER FILES doesn't remotely fit into. On the other hand, this is not a conven-

tional super-hero book either, so traditional line drawings didn't seem appropriate either. The answer turned out to be the computerized creations of Tom Canty, whose work I only knew from his wonderful fantasy paintings for Ace Books. It was Bob Greenberger who thought of him for HACKER FILES because of the terrific work he's been doing on HELLBLAZER. The resulting covers are incredibly rich in color and visually powerful, even though they never exist as physical objects until they're printed from the disc that Tom sends to DC.

So the creative team is now in place. As I write this column we have eight issues scripted and laid out. The direction of the book seems pretty well established. We will be dealing with real life as much as possible, taking our cues from recent news stories. This first miniseries covers the virus in the Pentagon; later issues take off from the massacre in Tiananmen Square, the Justice Department raids on computer bulletin boards, and topics ranging from NASA to global software piracy to artificial intelligence.

The final, most important link is you—the reader. From the outset we wanted THE HACKER FILES to find an audience that might be new to comics. We wanted to reach people who are excited about computers but don't especially care to see guys in colored tights hitting each other.

Which means we care about getting it right. I spent eight years working in documentation and programming, writing first in Centurion's own proprietary language, then finally moving on to BASIC and C Language. I've done both application and systems programming, advertising, installations, and even a little hard-

ware maintenance. But I don't kid myself that I'm any kind of guru.

Alan Wexelblat, who knows a lot more about computers than I ever will, helped as best he could with this first series. The mistakes that remain are mine, and Alan is only responsible for making things better than they were. For instance: Alan warned me that UNIX isn't considered secure enough for a government installation. My reply is that Digitronix's operating system looks like UNIX, but isn't, exactly.

Another friend who read and critiqued this issue was Kim Fairchild, who is involved in virtual reality research. He provided me with a lot of advice and encouragement, as well as printouts and other reference material.

Kim suggested that Marshall would use a real-life text editor called "emacs" which is a product of something called the "Free Software Foundation." These guys seem very cool and very much of the same ideology as Jack Marshall. They give this editor away, not only executables, but source code as well. For more information, contact the Free Software Foundation, Inc., 875 Mass Ave, Cambridge, MA 02139, or call (817) 878-3298.

The cellular automaton on page 14 was created using software by Rudy Rucker. This is a sort of primitive artificial life, in which cells breed and die according to an initial algorithm. Rudy is very big into these things, and has developed a commercial program called CA LAB: the Rudy Rucker Cellular Automata Laboratory. It's available from Autodesk, Inc., at (800) 525-2763. The original price was \$59.95, and I won't guarantee that that hasn't gone up by now.

These are examples of the intersection I'm trying to get between comics and real programming. Now I want feedback from you. One way is to simply sit down and write a letter to us at the address shown above. Because THE HACKER FILES is special, you have an alternative. I am in the process of setting up on-line letter columns on both the GENie and CompuServe bulletin boards. The best of the mail we receive on-line will be reprinted here, alongside the traditional letters that come in envelopes.

I'm open to any suggestions or criticisms you might have. Got some far-fetched explanations for how this Digitronix gear does all the wonderful things it does? I'm all ears. Did I goof on a net address? Let me hear about it. DC will provide posters and other promotional material to give away to the readers with the most creative suggestions.

I want to end up with a book that tells the truth about computers and the people who use them, a book that fairly and honestly represents the hacker underground, a book that addresses the issues you think are important. I can't do this without your help.

And finally, to Bob Wayne, Elliot Maggin, Martha Millard, Dick Giordano, Martha Thomases, Rick Magyar, Rick Klaw, and Carlos Kastro—many thanks, people, I couldn't have done it without you.

NEXT ISSUE: A short history of Jack Marshall, Digitronix, and the Almighty Dollar; Stael gets involved in the deadly games that nations play; and look out, world—Master Blaster is on the case!

—Lewis Shiner



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Time After Time

This week, we continue to examine your letters to *Inside DC*...

Dear Michael,

In *Inside DC* #27, among other columns of yours, I've noticed that many readers are requesting some of the lesser-known DC heroes like Jonah Hex and Sgt. Rock, whose exploits took place in the DC Universe's past. I have a suggestion for a book I'd like to see, and I think others will want to see it, too.

DC Comics has such a rich history that it's printed stories of characters whose adventures take place in such time periods as the Old West, World Wars I and II, the Prehistoric Age, the far future, and even medieval times. There was Jonah Hex, Viking Prince, etc. That's why I think a comic should be published with each issue taking place in a different era. Marvel tried this experiment awhile back with *Amazing High Adventure*, as I believe it was called, but it didn't work out because it used either real people in historical fiction or one-shot characters. Due to the fact that DC owns characters (well known characters, I might add) from different time periods, I think this format would work out at DC. Each issue could be normalized but with different characters, or à la LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT, could have rotating story arcs with a different character in each arc: Viking Prince in one, Jonah Hex in another, Sgt. Rock in another, Enemy Ace in another, and possibly even Booster Gold before he traveled to the 20th century. Then we could have Rip Hunter, the return of Dinosaur Island (if SUPERMAN's "Blackout" wasn't enough!), and so on and so forth.

How's it sound? I think that you guys could pull it off, and have a bona fide bestseller. Uncle Sam, too, could

be included, during his days in the Revolution. Maybe even *Etrigan the Demon* could show up not only as a sales booster, but a guest star or cover star in a medieval issue. Please consider my idea, and I hope to see your reply in a future issue of *Inside DC*!

Joey Marchese
Union, NJ

P.S. Even *Waverider* could show up. Just thought of this as I'm about to mail this letter. 4/14/92

Joey, I hope you read the recent ARMAGEDDON: INFERNO miniseries, as it featured a time-traveling team-up involving many of DC's characters, past and present, including Batman, the Creeper, Enemy Ace, and Jo Nah of the Legion of Super-Heroes. But as for an anthology title starring DC's heroes of yesteryear...

You're gonna love July's SGT. ROCK SPECIAL, an all-new 64-page one-shot featuring four hard-hitting war adventure stories. Edited by Michael Golden and Kim Yale, SGT. ROCK SPECIAL opens with a 16-page Sgt. Rock and Easy Company tale reuniting Rock's classic creative team, writer Robert Kanigher and artist Joe Kubert! Also, classic DC war heroes Gunner and Sarge appear in "The Hunters," scripted and illustrated by Tim Truman of HAWK WORLD and Scout fame. Finally, a psychological portrait of the horrors of combat by George Pratt (ENEMY ACE: WAR IDYLL) titled "The Great War" and an unusual war tale called "The Enemy" by Ron Wagner round out this Special's lineup.

You'll also want to make sure you look out for the 64-page BLACKHAWK SPECIAL, written by John Ostrander, drawn by Mike Vosburg, and edited by Mike Gold. It features a story that spans twelve years—from the assassination of JFK in 1963 to the fall of Saigon in 1975. BLACKHAWK SPECIAL #1 will ship in the first week of November.

Regarding DC's western heroes, there's some big news about JONAH HEX coming. Stay tuned to *Inside DC* for details.

And don't forget that the graphic novel ENEMY ACE: WAR IDYLL by George Pratt remains available from your local comics dealer, while last year's VIKING GLORY: THE VIKING PRINCE by Lee Marrs and Bo Hampton will be released in soft-cover next week.

Projecting ahead into the future—the DC Universe's future, that is—October will witness the release of the first issue of an 8-issue maxiseries reintroducing the SPACE RANGER into the limelight. This series, by writer Michael Jan Friedman (STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION), penciller John Calimee (STARMAN, Nexus), and editor Paul Kupperberg, features the story of how spoiled rich kid Rick Starr becomes Space Ranger during his struggle against a covert alien plot for control of Earth in the 23rd century.

And let's not forget the adventures of the 30th century's defenders, the LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES, appearing each month in their own title plotted by Keith Giffen, scripted by Tom and Mary Bierbaum, pencilled by Jason Pearson, inked by Karl Story, and edited by yours truly. There are big plans for DC's future this year in LEGION, including an explosive event in issue #38 and a new monthly spinoff, LEGIONNAIRES, written by the Bierbaums and pencilled by Chris Sprouse.

But if you want to see an anthology starring DC's heroes of yesteryear and tomorrow, Joey, then be sure to buy SGT. ROCK SPECIAL—and encourage others to do so, too. A lot of us at DC would love to publish Sgt. Rock, Anthro, Bat Lash, Jonah Hex, Tommy Tomorrow, the Haunted Tank, Time Masters, and heroes from DC's past and future on a more regular basis. If reader and sales response to SGT. ROCK SPECIAL, BLACKHAWK SPECIAL, and SPACE RANGER is strong enough, we'll seriously consider Joey's proposal. It's all up to you, readers!

See you next week.

—Michael Eury



OCD Kicking ass
and taking names



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